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ABSTRACT

This study investigated whether or not students apply educational theory to practical situations when they are involved in a learning process that starts from their own educational experiences and "Gestalts," the holistic unity of knowledge, feelings, values, and meanings linked to concrete situations encountered before, and colored by subjective and value-laden experiences. A curriculum was created that alternated practical experiences and classroom learning within the limits of the course. Additionally, there were opportunities for reflection on, and improvement of, students' educational practices. The study, designed as a case study ("Julia") took place at a university in the Great Lakes region, mostly in the classroom where the social studies methods course was taught. Data consisted of field notes and Julia's class assignments: lesson plans, unit plans, micro teaching materials, and reflection. Julia was interviewed twice, and the researcher kept a journal of thoughts and feelings about the project. Case study data were analyzed using the concept of emergent themes. Based on data analysis an interpretation of the case study was created, using a hermeneutic approach. Julia's case is a good example of what can happen if a student advances in a teacher education program without getting the theoretical and practical knowledge needed for teaching. Displaying a traditional belief system related to teaching, Julia's definition of teaching fits the banking model of education (Freire, 1970), and the question becomes what teacher educators should do about students who base teaching on these types of beliefs. Students should be made aware of their beliefs/values related to teaching, and teacher educators should look for ways to integrate theory and practice so they will be integrated in the teacher. Contains a figure and 72 references. (BT)

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Running head: THEORY AND PRACTICE IN SS METHODS

Making theory-practice connections in a social studies methods course: A case study

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Making connections between theory and practice is an issue that has occupied the minds of teacher educators for over a century. At various times, it has provoked questions concerning the purpose of theory, the theory future teachers should learn, how teachers think, and the preconceptions about teaching students bring to teacher education programs (see van 't Hooft, 2000 for a historical overview). Theory has been deemed more important than practice for the majority of the 1900s, especially with the advent of process-product research in the 1950s (see Shulman, 1986). However, an emphasis on teacher thinking and the preconceptions of pre-service teachers has shifted the weight more in the direction of the study of practice through teacher research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Duckworth, 1986). In addition, models of teacher education that build knowledge about teaching by starting from student experiences have emerged as well (see Korthagen & Kessels, 1999). Thus, some educational researchers and practitioners are going one step further by arguing that theory and practice are not separate but should be integrated. This construct has been defined as 'praxis' (see Lather, 1986).

Problem Statement and Significance

Being an instructor of an undergraduate social studies methods course forces me to address theory-practice issues on a daily basis. As a matter of fact, students in social studies education often complain that the theory they learn is irrelevant because there are no or very limited opportunities for application in school settings. This is also known as the transfer problem (Zeichner & Tabachnik, 1981). According to Adler (1991),

> There seems to be little doubt that there is a gap between theory, what social studies ought to be, and practice, what happens in many classrooms. What is far less certain is how to account for this gap and what, if anything, to do to narrow it. (p. 210)

I encountered this issue in the methods course I taught in the Spring 2000 semester. About three weeks into the course, the class (including myself) became involved in a heated debate about the possible causes for the perceived theory-practice gap. Students argued that previous classes had focused primarily on theory, and they expressed serious concerns about not being prepared for the student teaching phase. Consequently, I asked students what they felt they would need to be prepared, and together we redesigned the syllabus, partially based on the model developed by Korthagen and Kessels (1999). This model proposes that teacher education should integrate theory and practice (praxis) in teacher education so that it leads to integration within the teacher. In addition, the model puts a heavy emphasis on reflective practices. It is described in further detail in the review of literature.

The theory-practice problem in teacher education is a serious one and obviously warrants attention. If students cannot and do not apply what they learn, then what is the point of teacher education? Unfortunately this is the attitude that a substantial number of pre-service teachers display when asked about the value of their learning. They often feel that the pedagogical knowledge they learn in a teacher preparation program is nebulous and has no value in teaching. Instead, pre-service teachers want to learn the nuts and bolts of teaching practice.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to find out if students apply educational theory to practical situations when they are involved in a learning process that starts from their own educational experiences and Gestalts, the holistic unity of knowledge, feelings, values, and meanings linked to concrete situations encountered before, and colored by subjective and value-laden experiences of such situations (Korthagen, 1993; Korthagen & Kessels, 1999). In order to do this, I created a curriculum that alternated practical experiences and classroom learning within

the limits of the course. In addition, there were many opportunities for reflection on, and improvement of, students' educational practices.

Hypothesis

Based on the limited time frame (about 12 weeks), the scholarly literature related to cognitive psychology (see Sprinthal & Thies-Sprinthal, 1983) and the Korthagen and Kessels model, I hypothesized that the students in my social studies methods course might begin to integrate theory and practice by applying the former to the latter. Since my students had only limited access to practical experiences in the form of a 24-hour field practicum and class-based practice in lesson planning and teaching, I expected the changes in the curriculum to have only minimal effects. In fact, I expected my students to become aware of their teaching Gestalts and maybe start to form a schema, but I did not really expect them to move beyond that.

Review of Literature

The literature related to theory-practice integration and teacher reflection as described by Korthagen and Kessels (1999) goes back to the late 1970s. In teacher education, research scholars noted a subtle shift from studying teacher behavior to teacher thinking (e.g. Feiman, 1979). Schön (1983, 1987) became one of the forerunners in this area with his inquiry into reflection and knowledge-in-action, to help define what teacher thinking, or better yet reflection, actually entails. Schön's work was heavily influenced by Dewey, who had stated 50 years earlier that reflective thinking is "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends" (1933, p. 6). Dewey believed that even though practical experience was important in teacher education, techniques and methods learned should be grounded in theoretical principles of the content taught as well as the "psychological and ethical philosophy of education" (Dewey, 1904, p. 15), an idea similar to that of Shulman's (1987) concept of pedagogical content knowledge. It had

taken educational thinkers this long to come back to a very basic question, "how do we learn to make meaning?" (Dewey, 1933, p. 121), yet they would put a different spin on it.

A plethora of questions related to teacher thinking emerged, as there was a shift away from general theory to an increased appreciation for the individuality of each teacher (Korthagen & Russell, 1995). These questions can be organized into three related groups:

1. What is reflection and can teachers do it?

According to Schön (1983) there are forms of professional knowledge which are tacit but essential for the exercise of professional judgment and decision-making. Such knowledge can be found in professional action, and may be developed by reflection-in-action (see also Pollard, 1996). In this respect, reflection-in-action is defined as focusing "interactively on the outcomes of action, the action itself, and the intuitive knowledge implicit in the action" (Schön, 1983, p. 56). Thinking is no longer separated from doing.

Even though Schön's work has been highly influential in educational research, his ideas have not gone uncriticized. For example, Gilliss (1988) and Shulman (1988) have challenged Schön's binary consisting of professional knowledge and technical rationality, which characterizes the latter as a negative force. Fenstermacher (1988) also sees problems with Schön's use of a "new epistemology of practice" and his definition of research (Fenstermacher, 1988, p. 40). Furthermore, Court (1988), Gilliss (1988), and van Manen (1995) are concerned that teachers may not have the time to engage in reflection the way Schön envisions it.

2. Should we reflect as teachers, and if so, how can we prepare students to become reflective teachers?

The concept of teacher reflection became widely accepted in teacher education circles in the 1980s. The idea was that teachers as professionals should be responsible

for their actions, and that teacher training should "transcend mere training in the use of specific behavioral competencies (Korthagen, 1993). Likewise, Kincheloe (1993) argued that there is a need for teacher reflection so that teachers have a chance to conceptualize the moral, ethical, and cognitive aspects of teaching and do not become technicians isolated from their context (see also Korthagen & Russell, 1995). In fact, teacher "ways of knowing are unique" (Kincheloe, 1993, p. 22). In addition, scholars advanced the idea that teachers should see the relationships between theories as well as between thinking and acting (see also Schön, 1983). Moreover, the way one views teaching also influences whether or not and how teachers should reflect (see e.g. Kincheloe, 1993; and Zeichner, 1983, for an overview).

The related question how to provide opportunities for student teachers to become reflective practitioners is more difficult to resolve. Psychologists and educators have struggled with this issue at least since Dewey wrote How we think (1933), especially since there is a lack of cognitive developmental models for adulthood (Sprinthal & Thies-Sprinthal, 1983). The main questions to be addressed here are "how persons learn from experience, and how to identify experiences that are educative" (Reiman, 1999, p. 598). In addition, students have varying levels of conceptual complexity, which influences how deeply they can reflect (Oja & Sprinthal, 1978, Perry, 1970).

Since teachers vary in their abilities to reflect (Reiman, 1999) it has been difficult to create detailed models of reflection or specific techniques to promote teacher reflection. As a result, most program descriptions that appear in the literature are quite general. However, scholarship seems to suggest that effective models based on cognitive psychological theory incorporate role-taking experiences (e.g. Sprinthal & Thies-Sprinthal, 1983), case study analysis (e.g. Herman, 1998;

Lundeberg & Scheurman, 1997), and above all continuous and guided reflection, especially during the student teaching phase.

Researchers at the University of Utrecht's teacher education program have been especially active in this area. In 1985, Korthagen developed a model of reflection he defined as the ALACT model, based on the earlier work by Miller, Galanter, & Pribham (1960), and Skemp (1979). The name is actually an acronym for the stages of this reflective model: act, look back, awareness of essential aspects, create alternatives, and trial. The model is circular, as the fifth and last stage is a repetition of the first stage.

In addition, Korthagen (1993) proposed that more attention should be paid to non-rational and non-linear modes of reflection, agreeing with a growing number of educators and researchers "that strictly logical thinking is not the most appropriate tool for solving the problems that teachers confront in the classroom" (Clark & Lampert, 1985, p. 148; see also Clark & Lampert, 1986; Eisner, 1985). In addition, the growing knowledge base of teaching indicated that teaching is more complex than what was previously assumed. Balancing rational and non-rational reflection would address these issues, the advantages being that students get a multiple-sided view of teaching, would be able to connect theory to practice, and be able to be rational and creative simultaneously. These goals could be achieved by using techniques like mirroring; the use of metaphors, drawing, or photographs, and guided fantasies (Korthagen, 1993). As a result, reflection would focus more on the individuality of the teacher.

3. What is the role of theory in teacher education, which theory is the most important, and how can we apply it in practice?

The shift in focus from the more rational approaches to reflection to non-rational and practical aspects of reflection and teaching forced many educators to rethink the role of theory in teacher education and its application in practice. In

addition, it had become increasingly apparent that there was a widening gap between the theory learned at the university and the practice in the schools. As a result, many teacher educators began to advocate a more balanced approach by which students should be made aware that educational theory should inform rather than dictate their practice (e.g. Clark, 1984; Dueck, 1985; Floden & Klinzig, 1990; Koetsier, Wubbels, & Korthagen, 1997; Roberts, 1985), and that "knowledge and action cannot be separated in the learning process" (Winograd, 1998, p. 296).

Based on these arguments additional questions surfaced. If theory is to inform, what is expertise in teaching? Who are the experts? How is this expertise communicated to students of teaching? (Lampert & Clark, 1990). These questions are complicated for several reasons. First, practice has its own integrity. Second, actions give meaning to theory. Finally, the current assumption is that theory-practice integration has to take place within the individual student, and as such, teacher education has become much more complicated than merely teaching student teachers the proper techniques (Korthagen & Russell, 1995; van Manen, 1995).

In the late 1980s research on teacher thinking gained a whole new dimension. Because of the interest in teacher reflection and the changing nature and role of educational theory, scholars became increasingly aware of the fact that students entering teacher education programs brought with them an often well-developed and deeply embedded set of preconceptions about teaching (Hollingsworth, 1989). Up to this point, teacher educators had basically ignored the ideas, beliefs, and values that students brought with them, "the cumulative experience of school lives" (Britzman, 1986/1999).

Scholars concluded this was one of the reasons for the theory-practice gap. Students brought with them practical theories about teaching, based on "their prolonged experience of compulsory classroom life" (Britzman, 1986/1999, p. 183). A teacher's job was seen by many as limited to classroom performance, and as a result

students were merely interested in learning the tricks, seeing teaching methods as the ends rather than the means. Educational theory was increasingly viewed as remote and separate from the practical world of teaching.

Student preconceptions of teaching created a new set of questions for teacher educators, although some relationships with teacher reflection can be seen. What are students' prior beliefs? Where and how do students get these preconceptions? How do they effect their training? Are they related to educational theory, and if so, how? Can they be related to educational theory? (Hollingsworth, 1988; Koetsier, Wubbels, & Korthagen, 1997; Rodriguez, 1993).

It was obvious that universities would have to deal with student preconceptions. The question was how teacher education programs were going to address students' prior beliefs about teaching so that students would realize that their training is relevant. In order to do this teacher education programs would first have to understand "the distinctions students construct between what they consider practical versus theoretical, or ideal versus real in their professional preparation" (Rodriguez, 1993, p. 215). Once understanding was attained, teacher educators could then decide how these beliefs should be changed. In addition, teacher educators would have to think about whether or not they should try to change student preconceptions, and what the goal of teacher education is in general.

There seems to be agreement among teacher educators and researchers that student preconceptions of teaching should be altered to include theory. After all, it is one thing to walk into a "classroom with an imaginary bag of tricks, full of ideas, strategies, and educational theories," but quite another to know which trick to use when (Rodriguez, 1993, p. 218). In addition to the ALACT model, Korthagen has developed a series of activities to promote reflection in teacher education (Korthagen, 1992). The techniques are aimed at helping students to reframe (Schön, 1983, 1987) their educational perspectives based on educational theories learned

during teacher training. This is achieved by making students aware of "the relationships in their cognitions about teaching" (Korthagen, 1992, p. 265).

Creating this student awareness is one element of a larger construct. Going back to Dewey's (1904) ideas related to balancing theory and practice, Korthagen and Kessels (1999) warned that teacher educators are walking on thin ice when discussing

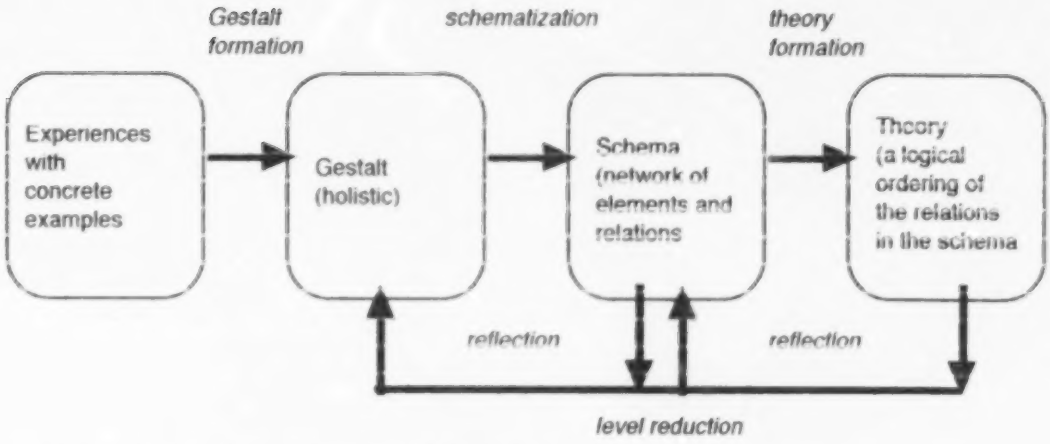
> whether teacher education should start with theory or practice
> instead of the more important question of how to integrate the two
> in such a way that it leads to integration within the teacher. (p. 4)

They went on to say that there is a need for theoretical bases to change teacher education. For one, the nature of theory relevant for teachers needs to be examined. In addition, more needs to be known about the relationship between teacher cognition and teacher behavior, because changing cognition does not necessarily change behavior.

Korthagen and Kessels (1999) have attempted to answer these questions by proposing a model of levels of learning (Figure 1). An unexpected situation or encouragement can lead a teacher to reflect on his or her Gestalt, "the dynamic and holistic unity of needs, feelings, values, meanings and behavioral inclinations triggered by an immediate situation" (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999, p. 9). Becoming aware of the elements of Gestalts and their relationships, teachers then form schemata. Reflection on the schema level can lead a teacher to the theory level. Eventually, "knowledge on the schema or even the theory level can become self-evident to the teacher, and the knowledge can be used in a less conscious, 'intuitive' way" (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999, p. 10). The schema or theory is reduced to a Gestalt, a phenomenon van Hiele (1986) defined as the theory of level reduction.

Figure 1

Levels in the Process of Learning



Korthagen, F. A. J., & Kessels, J. P. A. M. (1999), p. 10.

Korthagen and Kessels' model implies a changing role for teacher educators who need to think about ways to present theory so that students will find it useful (Drever & Cope, 1999). One way to achieve this is by using teacher research, or research-as-praxis (see Lather, 1986). This form of research is participatory and aimed at change, without imposing theory on a situation so that it explains the lives of others without violating their reality, yet taking into account the larger socio-psychological structures that shape human life. Therefore, the important issues to be resolved here are the nature of the relationship between data (practice) and theory, and how to balance practice and theory so that one does not overshadow the other to the point of exclusion.

In sum, teacher education programs need to integrate the theory-based, competency-based, and reflective approaches to offer students opportunities to more fully develop their Gestalts while being exposed to relevant educational theories. Only then will students view theory as a valuable addition to their professional knowledge. Therefore, teacher educators need to become experts on both theory-to-

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practice and practice-to-theory relationships. Teacher educators can possibly obtain this expertise by practicing what they preach, i.e. getting involved in teacher research themselves.

While there is a broad and systematic research base for theory-practice issues in teacher education in general, up to 1988 "research on the teaching of social studies has been, on the whole, particularistic and unsystematic" (Adler, 1991, p. 211), and comparatively limited in volume. Most of the research has been descriptive or quasi-experimental, "with the researcher generally focusing on one treatment or innovation and its effect on pre-service or in-service teachers' skills" (Adler, 1991, p. 218). Most of this research has focused on the methods courses and student teaching experiences (Zevin, 1990).

In the last decade these trends seemed to have continued. A review of articles related to social studies teacher education in three social studies education journals (Social Education, The Social Studies, Theory and Research in Social Education) yielded 16 articles. Thirteen of these articles dealt with the social studies methods course (Dinkelman, 1999; Fehn & Koeppen, 1998; Hughes, 1997; Johnston, 1990; McKee & Day, 1992; Milson & Brandtley, 1999; Mitchell, Evans, Daly, & Roach, 1997; Owens, 1997, 1999; Passe, 1994; Ross, 1996; Yeager & Wilson, 1997; Wade, 1999; Wilson, Konopak, & Readence, 1994), and three addressed issues related to student teaching (Fehn & Koeppen, 1998; Slekar, 1998; Wilson, Konopak, & Readence, 1994). With the exception of one (Hughes, 1997), all studies were descriptive in nature, using case study as the strategy of choice. The present study seeks to build on the work of Johnston (1990), who described "how students' background knowledge, beliefs, experience, and personalities influenced what they learned in a social studies methods course and their consequent learning to teach" (p. 207).

Methods

Design

The study was designed as a case study. I was interested in learning from this particular case, not necessarily in generalizing beyond what I observed (Stake, 1998). Therefore, using intensity sampling was used, as it "consists of information-rich cases that manifest the phenomenon of interest intensely (but not extremely)" (Patton, 1990, p. 171). The complexities of the case and its multiple contexts (physical, economic, political, ethical, etc.) were studied holistically in order to provide a vicarious experience for the reader through thick description. As such, the inquiry was designed to provide understanding or *Verstehen* (Geertz, 1973), not explanation, of the phenomenon under study.

Participant

The case study consisted of Julia (pseudonym), a female student in her early twenties. She is white, lower middle class, and her father is a high school teacher. At the time of the study she was a student in the social studies methods course that I taught, and volunteered to participate.

Setting

The study took place at a university in the Great Lakes region, mostly in the classroom where the social studies methods course was taught. The class consisted of ten students, all white. Six were male and three were female. Because of its small size, the class was held in the smallest classroom in the College of Education. It was brightly lit but had no windows. We moved to a larger room for the micro teaching assignment. In addition, I visited once with Julia at her field placement site. The field placement was a requirement for the course and consisted of 24 hours of observation, teaching, and other activities related to teaching. Julia was placed in a middle school in a nearby town. She mostly observed during her field experience, in the classrooms of two seventh grade social studies teachers who happened to be husband and wife.

Data collection

Data was collected over one fifteen-week semester in Spring 2000. It consisted of field notes and Julia's class assignments: lesson plans, unit plans, micro teaching materials, self-analysis and reflection, field experience journals and observations, and her portfolio. In addition, I interviewed her twice; the first time about four weeks into the semester, and the second time after the micro teaching experience. I also taped a conversation we had two weeks before the end of the semester when she came to see me for help on her unit plan revisions. Finally, I kept a journal of my thoughts and feelings about the project as I proceeded through it.

Field notes and interviews were transcribed and given an initial coding. Class assignments were photocopied upon receipt, and chronologically organized by date.

Data analysis

The case study data were analyzed using Lincoln & Guba's (1985) concept of emergent themes. After the initial coding several themes were visible. They included Julia's ideas and beliefs about teaching, her application of theory to practice, and her preparation for teaching. Each theme had subcategories. For example, subcategories of the theme ideas and beliefs about teaching included K-12 experiences, beliefs, and teacher-centeredness. As new data came in it was coded to these themes and topics. In addition, I provided Julia with transcripts of the two interviews in order to receive feedback from her and to make revisions where necessary. This is also known as member checking (Guba & Lincoln, 1983; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Finally, the data were analyzed using triangulation, a research methodology similar to corroboration in historical inquiry. The variety of source materials enabled me to cross-check references for credibility and confirmability.

Based on the data analysis an interpretation of the case study was created. It is important to note here that I used a hermeneutic approach, meaning that I interpreted what I observed in the context of my own knowledge and experiences.

Gallagher (1992) notes there is a tension in this type of interpretation, because it "involves the attempt to remain true to our circumstances while we maintain an openness to the object of interpretation (p. 150). As such, my own understandings of the reality in which I partake needs to be described. In this respect, my interpretation of the students' beliefs about teaching and applications of theory in practice "would reflect my evolving understandings of them (Johnston, 1990, p. 210).

Finally my role of both researcher and teacher in this case study needs to be considered. I simultaneously taught the methods course, supervised the accompanying field experience, and did the inquiry. My presence as the instructor might have colored my observations, and doing the research might have effected my teaching of the course. As a result, I had to keep in mind throughout the study that I had taken on this dual role.

The case study: Julia's semester in the methods class

After a two-year hiatus, Julia, a white student in her early twenties had come back to the teacher education program in which I teach. Her love for history and the fact that she saw how much gratification her father got out of teaching had helped her to decide to become a teacher also. When she entered my class in late January she was one semester away from student teaching.

Beliefs about teaching. Julia had some very specific ideas about teaching. She thought a teacher should

> lead the classroom and then young people in a positive manner. I think that they have a subject area that is kind of like a stick they can carry to guide their classroom in the direction of learning and understanding the subject, and also . . . about life. (Interview, 2-22-00)

In addition, she felt that knowing your students is very important to motivate them,

> and you can bring their love of social studies which might just be a speck in their body [sic], you can bring that out of them. And if you can motivate

> them in, move them about the subject, then you can become more effective teacher inside the classroom. (Interview, 2-22-00)

Finally, classroom management was a strong element of her beliefs about teaching. In her mind, keeping control of your classroom was crucial to being successful as a teacher. "The more structured your time is, the better you're gonna perform" (Interview, 2-22-00).

After the micro teaching, these same beliefs were evident, albeit in a more implicit way. When discussing her teaching, Julia felt she had done a good job, even though my evaluation showed that her lesson was very teacher-centered. She thought that she had tried to pick a topic that related to her students, and discussed the weather in different parts of the United States by bringing up vacation spots for Spring Break. The lesson basically consisted of a lecture interspersed with some lower-level questions. When we discussed the fact she had been marked down for this she stated that her students

> were being challenged. What if I felt that them even talking in class is a challenge. You know in my activity was a class discussion, you know a guided discussion. And I also did two other activities, so I feel that like, how could I have thrown in, just because I didn't pull out a video and make them stand up and jump through a hula hoop or something, I don't feel, that's not, that doesn't mean the class is not being active . . . 'cause I really, I enjoy discussion, that's when I learn the most. (Interview, 3-14-00)

It is interesting to see that she called her micro lesson a guided lecture in this interview while in the subsequent micro lesson re-analysis two days later she used the word 'lecture' (Micro lesson critique, 3-16-00).

Julia's beliefs about teaching never really changed throughout the semester, a sign that the socialization that took place when she had been a student herself was still prevalent. The conversation I had with her at the end of the semester about

revising a unit plan that was very teacher-centered and focused on knowledge transmission shows this.

> Julia: I'm just stuck on like, why can't it just be some more simple? You know why, why isn't it, why can't I teach the way that I like, feel comfortable teaching? And I feel comfortable in front of the class talking to them, leading a discussion, instead of doing the group work and stuff, because that's, as a teacher that's what I like to do.
>
> Researcher: ...what if you run into a situation where that kind of an approach doesn't work, and you don't have any alternatives to fall back on?
>
> Julia: But I'm, I'm gonna make it work, that's my point. As a teacher, I think I'm gonna be dynamic in front of the classroom enough where my kids are gonna look at me when they start screwing off, they're not gonna screw off anymore. I'll give 'em time to do homework after class, get 'em you know going on reading the newspaper, doing stuff that's gonna make them better citizens, but when I am teaching to them, I want to be the one to teach them. I want to be the one to look them in the eye and try to explain things to them, and I want to be the one to answer their questions. I don't want them to use the Internet to go, you know I'm not gonna have ten computers in the classroom and say, ok guys, here's what we're gonna do. You go up on the computer and look through something and tell me what you think, you know. No, I want to be the one telling them the hardcore facts, and then giving them an assignment, getting feedback from their verbal actions, questions they ask, are they understanding things correctly . . . That's my style of teaching. (Student conference, 4-27-00)

Application of theory to practice. One of the foci of this study was to find out how students apply theory to practice in teaching. Because we know from research that traditional approaches, in which theory is learned first and then applied in

practice, do not work, I tried a different approach, as described above. In Julia's case, this did not seem to work either. Initially she was very resistant to educational theory in general,

> I structure everything I do around my students, and I'm gonna, try to get things out of them, you know, but I'm not gonna think about curriculum standards for social studies, to figure out things, I mean, it's gonna be, me how to handle the people, if you can handle the kids, and if you can show that you, like your subject, you're a knowledgeable teacher, you've got a good personality, you can stand up in front of the classroom and charm 'em, make 'em laugh, make 'em kind of get of scared of you if you get pissed, and, you're in business as a teacher. I don't think, the theory that they teach us, I just don't feel that it's gonna be used when I go into teaching. But I've only had five education classes in the past years. (Interview, 2-22-00)

However, Julia did say at the time that she could see a use for theory if taught properly,

> But the problem is, they don't relate our theory to the classroom, that's way it's not taught, taught properly, ok? We get theory in one class, and we get a practicum through another class, and we're not putting the two together to understand how it can go about, and that's the problem, they're not teaching us the theory properly. (Interview, 2-22-00)

Julia had a similar point of view after the micro teaching. When discussing her lesson and ways to improve on it she dismissed theory as an option.

> Researcher: But, what, I guess what I'm, what I'm aiming at here also is, if you were to go and look at a chapter in the book or an article to read, what, what's something that, that you would go look for?
>
> Julia: That's theory [laughs].
>
> Researcher: True.

> Julia: That's theory so I'd rather talk to people. I'd rather talk to other teachers . . . talk to my dad. (Interview, 3-14-00).

At the end of the semester her acceptance of theory may have changed somewhat, albeit probably temporarily. After mapping out a two-day lesson plan involving issue-based learning (see Evans & Saxe, 1996), she said she finally understood. Julia's revised lessons did show some evidence of this, but as I wrote in my journal after I worked with her

> I think the light finally came on when she and I walked through a two-day lesson as I saw it, but I pretty much had to show her how to do it. I put a sketch up on the board to show her what it would look like. She copied it all down and said that it made sense to her now. I would like to believe her but I'm not so sure. It's easy to model the behavior, much more difficult to change her beliefs. I'm worried about her going into the profession at this point. I don't know that she's ready. (Researcher journal, 4-27-00)

Preparation for teaching. At this point, I do not think my concern is totally unjustified. At the beginning of the semester Julia seemed mature, had a strong negative opinion about educational theory, and sounded like she was ready to teach. She readily argued about points she had lost on her micro teaching, and seemed to have thought about reasons why she should have been awarded those points. In fact, I thought at that point that the key to get through to her was to get her to see the value of educational theory for practical purposes.

However, I was proven to be completely wrong during the conversation I had with Julia regarding the unit plan revisions. As it turned out, the main problem was the fact that she was lacking knowledge in key areas such as teaching methods and strategies. This is possibly due to her resistance to theory, or a lack of it in her previous education classes. In any event, when Julia finally admitted to this gap in her knowledge, she became more insecure. She said, "this is where it all comes back

where I don't know what activities to do, you know, and that's what scares me" (Student conference, 4-27-00)

In order to deal with this fear, Julia used a defense mechanism, by holding on even stronger to her beliefs of teaching that would be defined today as 'traditional' or 'teacher-centered',

> Why can't it just be more simple? You know, why can't I teach the way that I like, feel comfortable teaching? And I feel comfortable in front of the class talking to them, leading a discussion, instead of doing the group work and stuff, because that's, as a teacher that's what I like to do. And so why can't I...? (Student conference, 4-27-00)

Conclusions and Implications for Teaching

Julia's case is a good example of what can happen if a student advances in a teacher education program without getting the theoretical and practical knowledge needed for teaching. Her negative attitude towards educational theory probably covered up this deficiency for years, until she was confronted with it in the social studies methods course. Displaying a traditional belief system related to teaching, Julia's definition of teaching fits the banking model of education as developed by Freire (1970), and the question becomes if and what teacher educators should do about students who base teaching on these types of beliefs.

Based on the literature and my research findings, a few conclusions may be drawn regarding the implications for teacher educators who run into students like Julia. First, it is important that students become aware of their beliefs and values related to teaching, as well as the implications of those beliefs and values for teaching practice. Second, teacher educators need to look for ways to integrate theory (classroom learning) and practice (school-based experiences) so that they will be integrated in the teacher (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999). One way to do this may be through what Lather (1986) has defined as 'praxis.' Finally, since traditional

approaches suffer from transfer problems (Zeichner & Tabachnik, 1981) they do not work. The Korthagen & Kessels model looks promising, but as applied in the case of Julia, it did not make a difference. Obviously more research into this teacher education model is needed, and Julia is only one case among many students who train to become teachers in any given year. The key is to make their learning meaningful.

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